

Jun-2-97 05:35P Congressional Affairs

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~~JFK~~UNCLASSIFIED FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL FORM

DATE: 2 June 1997

NO. OF PAGES 11

TO: Ed Cohen
FAX: 703-613-3020Lee Strickland
FAX: 703-613-3007

FROM: [REDACTED] CIA/OCA (Phone: 703-482-8824)

COMMENTS:

NEW DEADLINE FOR RESPONSES IS
C.O.B 3 JUNE 97.

6/3/97 - Brenda -

Brenda from Lee S. office
dropped this off. They will
call & let [REDACTED]
know that everyone was in
a conf yesterday & today.
They wants Ed to have SB
(Brenda) this.

**UNCLASSIFIED FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL FORM**

DATE: 2 June 1997 NO. OF PAGES 11

TO: Bob Caudle
FAX: 703-874-3208

Bruce Burke
FAX: 703-874-3208

FROM: [REDACTED] CIA/OCA (FAX: 703-428-5841)
(Phone: 703-482-8824)

COMMENTS: Please make an additional copy for Bruce Burke.
Thanks.

[REDACTED]

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FROM:GIBBONS, M.

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LRM ID: JAW106

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
Washington, D.C. 20503-0001

Friday, May 30, 1997

LEGISLATIVE REFERRAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Legislative Liaison Officer - See Distribution below

FROM: James J. Jukes (for) Assistant Director for Legislative Reference

OMB CONTACT: M. Jill Gibbons

PHONE: (202)395-7593 FAX: (202)395-3109

SUBJECT: National Archives and Records Administration Testimony on HR1553
Extension of the Authorization for the Assassination Records Review Board




* DEADLINE:

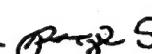
2PM Monday, June 2, 1997

In accordance with OMB Circular A-19, OMB requests the views of your agency on the above subject before advising on its relationship to the program of the President. Please advise us if this item will affect direct spending or receipts for purposes of the "Pay-As-You-Go" provisions of Title XIII of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990.

COMMENTS: A copy of HR 1553 is enclosed.

DISTRIBUTION LIST

AGENCIES:

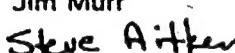
29-DEFENSE - Samuel T. Brick Jr. - (703) 697-1305 - 
51-General Services Administration - William R. Ratchford - (202) 501-0563
61-JUSTICE - Andrew Fois - (202) 514-2141

State

CIA

NSC

EOP:

Robert W. Schroeder
Ken Schwartz
Louisa Koch
Kim Newman
Maya Bernstein
Julie L. Haas
Jim Murr


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Statement of

Steven D. Tilley, Chief of the Access and Freedom of Information Staff
National Archives and Records Administration

Before the
Subcommittee on National Security, International Affairs, and Criminal Justice
Committee on Government Reform and Oversight
House of Representatives

June 1, 1997

Mr. Chairman, I am Steven D. Tilley, Chief of the Access and Freedom of Information Act Staff of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). I wish to thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of NARA in support of H.R. 1553, which will extend the authorization of the John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Review Board for one year to September 30, 1998. I am appearing today in my capacity as NARA's Chief of the President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection. In that role I am charged with implementing NARA's responsibilities under the Act and I serve as NARA's liaison to the Assassination Records Review Board (ARRB). This afternoon I would like to tell you a little bit of my background concerning records of the assassination of President Kennedy, explain the role of NARA in implementing the Act, and outline why the National Archives and Records Administration supports passage of this important piece of legislation.

Mr. Chairman, my career as an archivist has involved working with some of the most sensitive and highly classified records of our Government. I oversaw the closing of the office of the Watergate Special Prosecution Force (WSPF) and supervised the transfer of these records to the National Archives in 1977. I worked with the records of the WSPF for more than 11 years,

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serving for most of that time as the senior archivist for those records. I also served as the senior archivist for the records of the National Security Council (NSC) following the transfer of the NSC records of the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations in 1983. In 1989 I joined the staff of the National Security Council, where I served as Director of Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act Activities and later as NSC's Director of Information Disclosure with responsibility for all disclosure activities of the NSC. In 1993, I returned to NARA to become the Chief of the JFK Collection, and I have served in that capacity ever since. I became the Chief of the Access and FOIA Staff in January of this year.

Under the JFK Act, NARA had several major responsibilities. Three of these requirements, however, proved to be central to the work of the Assassination Records Review Board. Our first responsibility was to formally establish the President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection which we accomplished with the publication of an announcement in the Federal Register on December 21, 1992. As established on that date, the Collection only consisted of open records already in NARA's custody, primarily the records of the Warren Commission. Secondly, within 45 days of the statute being signed, NARA was required to prepare and make available standard identification forms for use by all government offices in describing assassination records and to create a database of these forms to serve as an electronic finding aid to the JFK Collection. Our third responsibility, which we shared with other government offices, was to identify, review, and make available to the public all assassination records that could be disclosed under the provisions of the law within a 300 day review period. Descriptions of all records reviewed were required to be entered into the database where they would be made widely available to the public.

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At the end of the review period in August 1993, newly released records were made available for research, including most of Lee Harvey Oswald's 201 Personality file, part of the Central Intelligence Agency's "segregated collection" of assassination related documents, and the records of the House Select Committee on Assassinations. The database was also available for use by researchers on that day.

When the ARRB members were confirmed by the Senate in April, 1994, my staff and I began to work with the Board and later with the Board's staff, to provide information on the records in the Collection at that time, the development and use of the database, our contacts and discussions with other agencies involved in searches for assassination related documents, and the existence of assassination records in the custody of private repositories or individuals. The ARRB and NARA have maintained an excellent working relationship through the 3 years of the Board's existence, and I would like to think that this close relationship has in some way contributed to the success of the ARRB.

NARA enthusiastically supports passage of H.R. 1553 to extend the ARRB's authorization. Our mission is not unlike that of the ARRB, to ensure ready access to essential documentary evidence. In the Board's case the essential evidence is any records relating to the assassination of President Kennedy. In our case essential evidence consists of all federal and presidential records that document the rights of American citizens, the actions of federal officials, and the national experience. The Review Board needs the time designated in this bill to complete its important work in making available as complete an historical record as possible concerning the

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assassination of President Kennedy. We would like to offer for your consideration some statistics and facts to demonstrate the success of the Board and support its one-year extension.

The John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection today bears little resemblance to the Collection that was established in December 1992. At that time, the Collection consisted of approximately 450 cubic feet of records from a few agencies. Today, the Collection has grown to more than 1,600 cubic feet of records or 3.75 million pages from more than 30 different government offices. Those numbers are a testament to the work of the Review Board in obtaining the cooperation of the entire Federal government in this important task.

The ARRB has not only succeeded in obtaining the cooperation of the Federal agencies but has also negotiated the donation of very important records that were previously held in private hands. Donations have included the related papers of James Garrison and Edward Wegmann, the prosecutor and defense attorney in the conspiracy trial of Clay Shaw, and the papers of J. Lee Rankin, the General Counsel and Chief of Staff of the Warren Commission. Copies of the papers of Senator Richard Russell, a member of the Warren Commission, that were donated to the University of Georgia are being reviewed and we hope will be made part of the Collection in the near future with the agreement of the University. For the information of the Committee, Mr. Chairman, I have attached to my testimony a copy of the Register of the Collection, which lists the major groups of Federal records and private papers, along with the supplemental listing of FBI files.

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Not only has the Collection increased dramatically in size, the significance of the records in the Collection cannot be overestimated. In addition to the records of numerous Executive branch agencies and offices, the records of relevant Congressional committees, related court cases, and records donated by private entities are available in the Collection. This rich documentation is searchable electronically, giving researchers the ability to seek out documents concerning a topic, person, or event, or even individual documents, not only at NARA's College Park facility, but from their own personal computer through the Internet. Equally important, the Collection provides researchers with a view of how our government worked during this period in history, as the documents reflect not only the operations of government as the offices and agencies reacted to the death of the President but also how these offices and agencies were operating in regard to other events that are related to the assassination, such as the campaign to destabilize the government of Cuba or the FBI's investigation of various organized crime figures. Perhaps this unique window on the operations of these agencies may be the most important result of the development of the Collection.

Furthermore, the Collection continues to grow. Additional FBI records will be added in the weeks and months ahead. Records of the Departments of the Army and Navy and the Joint Chiefs of Staff are currently under review. The addition of these records will only add to the richness of the Collection and increase its value to the general research community.

Public demand for those records is the ultimate evidence of the the value of the Collection. Reference requests have risen in number every year since the Collection opened with new records in August 1993. This year we have already received close to 600 written inquiries, an increase of

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30% over this time last year. The number of inquiries on our computer website is also steadily increasing. Since March, 1996 when the Collection was made available through the NARA website, the assassination records have been accessed over 100,000 times by the public. Many of the written inquiries we receive include copies of record identification forms taken from the database, showing that the researcher has accessed our website and downloaded information. The availability of the database via the Internet remains one of the most important developments that have come from this process.

Due to the exceptional work of the John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Review Board, great progress has been made on making available as complete a record as possible on the history of the assassination of John Kennedy. Without the focus, integrity, and expertise of the ARRB, the Collection would not have the size, quality, or public demand witnessed today. However, there is still much to do. NARA supports passage of H.R. 1553 so that this important work can be completed.

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105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1553

To amend the President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992 to extend the authorization of the Assassination Records Review Board until September 30, 1998.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 8, 1997

Mr. BURTON of Indiana (for himself, Mr. WAXMAN, and Mr. STOKES) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To amend the President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992 to extend the authorization of the Assassination Records Review Board until September 30, 1998.

- 1 *. . . Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
- 2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

2

1 SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF ASSAS-
2 SINATION RECORDS REVIEW BOARD.

3 The President John F. Kennedy Assassination
4 Records Collection Act of 1992 (44 U.S.C. 2107 note) is
5 amended—

6 (1) in section 7(o)(1), by striking "September
7 30, 1996" and all that follows through the end of
8 the paragraph and inserting "September 30, 1998.";
9 and

10 (2) in section 13(a), by striking "such sums"
11 and all that follows through "expended" and insert-
12 ing "to carry out the provisions of this Act
13 \$1,600,000 for fiscal year 1998".

○